

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02798 190755Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----033771 191953Z /70

R 181256Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8024
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2798

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PBOR IS LE US
SUBJ: ISRAELI INTENTIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON: THE "GOOD FENCE"

REF: TEL AVIV 5972

PARA 4 REFTEL STATES "THE GOI IS DETERMINED THAT THE GOOD FENCE SHALL BE MAINTAINED." IT IS PRECISELY THIS POSITION THAT BOTHERS US. WE AGREE THAT THERE IS NO "MORAL IMPERATIVE" FOR CLOSING THE GOOD FENCE NOW, NOR DO WE RECOMMEND THAT THE USG SHOULD "COME OUT AGAINST THE GOOD FENCE" PUBLICLY AT THIS TIME. IF THE INHABITANTS OF SOUTH LEBANON WANT AN OPEN BORDER WITH ISRAEL AND THE GOL AGREES, THE USG HAS NO INTEREST IN TRYING TO CLOSE IT. HOWEVER, IF AND WHEN THE GOL REESTABLISHES ITS AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH AND DECIDES, WITH THE SUPPORT OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCENCE OF THE LOCAL INHABITANTS, THAT IT WANTS TO RESTRICT MOVEMENT ACROSS THE LEBANESE-ISRAELI
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FRONTIER, THE USG IS OBLIGATED BY ITS SUPPORT FOR LEBANON'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY TO SUPPORT THE GOL IN THIS ACTION. WE BELIEVE THE USG SHOULD REJECT ANY ISRAELI ATTEMPT TO MAKE PERMANENT MAINTENANCE OF THE GOOD FENCE ONE OF THE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL (PARA 4 REFTEL). INTER ALIA, SUCH A CLAIM IS COMPLETELY OUTSIDE THE SCOPE

OF RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426. THE LEBANESE ALONE HAVE THE
RIGHT TO DECIDE THEIR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL; THE
USG SHOULD NOT AGREE TO SUPPORT A PERMANENT ISRAELI
EASEMENT ALONG THE LEBANESE BORDER AS THE PRICE FOR
TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.
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